Copy to All Signatories and Members of Working Group

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From the Secretary of State

21 October, 1983

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 11 October enclosing one from leaders of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain. It is encouraging that distinguished members of different faiths have come together to voice their collective concern for the plight of innocent civilians in Lebanon.

We share that concern and are doing all we can to ensure the safety of civilians, whether Palestinian or Lebanese. You will know that with our partners in the European Community we have made representations to the Lebanese and Israeli governments to emphasise our concern and to ask them to do their utmost to protect the civilian population in areas under their control. We have long believed that UNIFIL could play a greater role in this field. This, of course, would require the agreement of the troop contributors and of the Security Council. The most recent debate on renewal of UNIFIL's mandate was on 18 October, and we took the opportunity to stress again the need for the parties to reconsider UNIFIL's role.

We are also playing a part in the reconstruction of Lebanon. We have pledged two million pounds towards this, and the European Community have agreed to make available

/half

The Hon David Astor